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ABSTRACT

A survey of textbooks and official Ministry of Education programs of study for the Province of Ontario, Canada, revealed three stages in the history of teaching English language in intermediate and secondary schools. Prior to the mid-1960s language study was fundamentally the study of formal grammar and standard usage. From the mid-1960s until the early 1980s language study was broadened to include descriptive grammars, the history of the English language, dialect study, and inquiry approaches. By the mid-1980s, however, interest in teaching writing--particularly "the writing process"--pushed language study into the background and writing mechanics and standard usage once more became the central focus. Suggestions for putting the "revolution" (the "inquiry" period of the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s) back on track include: (1) a careful analysis of the textbooks and other materials developed in the 1960s and the 1970s to determine why they failed to meet the ongoing needs of teachers of English; (2) taking stock of materials available, paying particular attention to gaps which must be filled; and (3) a national survey of current language teaching practices and an assessment of teacher backgrounds and student knowledge. (Contains 77 references.) (RS)

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Language Awareness in Canadian Secondary Schools: The Revolution that Fizzled

Paper presented to
THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
ON LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION

March 1993

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These are, of course, general trends, and specific textbooks or programs of study were frequently out of step with the philosophy or practice of the time. In 1938, for example the program of study vilifies Latinate grammars, promotes descriptive and functional grammars, and quotes Jespersen's suggestion that instead of prescribing linguistic mores, language study should discover what "is actually said and written" which "may lead to a scientific understanding of the rules followed instinctively by speakers and writers." However, both the textbooks of the time and the province-wide final examinations set by the Ministry retained traditional grammar and writing mechanics as a focus, and within two years the more liberal definitions of language study disappeared from the guide, not to reappear for another thirty years.

During the "inquiry" period from the mid 1960s to the early 1980s the broadening and liberalization of language study was sanctioned by the course of studies but did not hold exclusive rights in the curriculum, and inquiry textbooks had to compete for teachers' attention with texts from a earlier era. On the one hand, textbooks such as Learning English and Learning Language were in line with Ministry guidelines and treated language as an object of study and interest. On the other hand, the Developing Language Skills series was approved in 1960 and with one revision remained on the approved list until 1990, despite the fact that for most of that time its traditional grill and drill approach to grammar was contrary to the official position in the Ministry guidelines. Generally, however, the textbooks were more subtly subversive: the prefaces and forewords preached progressive approaches to language study but the contents of the texts taught traditional grammar by rule, example, and exercise.

By the mid-1980s language teaching in approved textbooks largely returned to the study of mechanics and usage, primarily as an aid to improving written composition. One factor in the demise of inquiry teaching in language is the revolution in teaching written composition which became an all-consuming task of many teachers.

To put the revolution back on track we suggest: 1. a careful analysis of the textbooks and other materials developed in the 1960s and 1970s to determine why they failed to meet the ongoing needs of teachers of English; 2. taking stock of materials currently available (perhaps an annotated bibliography) paying particular attention to gaps which must be filled; and 3. a national survey of current language teaching practices and an assessment of teacher backgrounds and student knowledge.

Language Awareness in Canadian Secondary Schools: The Revolution that Fizzled

Paper presented to
THE FIFTH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION
ON LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA
NORWICH, ENGLAND
March 1993

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Abstract

A survey of textbooks and official Ministry of Education programs of study for the Province of Ontario, Canada, revealed three stages in the history of teaching English language in intermediate and secondary schools: prior to the mid-1960s language study was fundamentally the study of formal grammar and standard usage; from the mid-1960s until the early 1980s language study was broadened to include descriptive grammars, the history of the English Language, dialect study, and inquiry approaches; by the mid-1980s, however, interest in teaching writing--particularly 'the writing process'--pushed language study into the background and writing mechanics and standard usage once more became the central focus.

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liberal definitions of language study disappeared from the guide, not to reappear for another thirty years.

During the "inquiry" period from the mid 1960s to the early 1980s the broadening and liberalization of language study was sanctioned by the course of studies but did not hold exclusive rights in the curriculum, and inquiry textbooks had to compete for teachers' attention with texts from a earlier era. On the one hand, textbooks such as Learning English and Learning Language were in line with Ministry guidelines and treated language as an object of study and interest. On the other hand, the Developing Language Skills series was approved in 1960 and with one revision remained on the approved list until 1990, despite the fact that for most of that time its traditional grill and drill approach to grammar was contrary to the official position in the Ministry guidelines. Generally, however, the textbooks were more subtly subversive: the prefaces and forewords preached progressive approaches to language study but the contents of the texts taught traditional grammar by rule, example, and exercise.

By the mid-1980s language teaching in approved textbooks largely returned to the study of mechanics and usage, primarily as an aid to improving written composition. One factor in the demise of inquiry teaching in language is the revolution in teaching written composition which became an all-consuming task of many teachers. However, other teaching techniques also competed with language study for a place in the English curriculum. In the early 1970s, for example, sentence combining (which claimed to offer the potential for "improving

student writing without formal grammar instruction") took the place of language study in many classrooms. However, when teachers lost interest in sentence combining, they did not return to inquiry methods of language study.

To get the revolution in the teaching of language back on track, several approaches may be productive. First, North American English educators will need to join the international dialogue on Language Awareness to reap the benefits of the discussions and debates which have taken place in the United Kingdom over the past two decades. Second, to avoid repeating the mistakes of history, a critical examination of why the revolution of the 1960s and 1970s fizzled should be undertaken. Third, since a number of textbooks and other classroom materials which offered a variety of approaches to language study were produced during the revolutionary period, a critical stock taking is in order: which materials are appropriate for today's students and which require revision? Fourth, an assessment of current classroom practice is needed. Perhaps this could begin with an examination of what superior teachers of language do in their classrooms. Fifth, language teaching must be supported by a firm conceptual basis. If we cannot develop a strong rationale for teaching language in elementary and secondary schools, teachers will find better things to teach.

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Language Awareness in Canadian Secondary Schools: The Revolution That Fizzled

I. Introduction

Work on language awareness in the U.K. over the past two decades [summarized by Hawkins, 1992, and Donmall, 1985, for example] has gone largely unnoticed in North America, and perhaps the most accurate description of the topic for Canadian secondary schools and professional journals is "blissfully unaware." A topic as rich as language awareness offers many points of entry for researchers and practitioners who are interested in improving the way that language is taught in what we in Canada call "public" schools. As our point of entry, we chose a historical examination of the authorized curriculum of the Province of Ontario since the 1920s, augmented from time to time with materials from British Columbia and Alberta.

Our examination of official Ministry of Education programs of study and approved textbooks suggests that there were three stages in the history of teaching language in Canadian secondary schools: the study of formal grammar (firmly grounded in the tradition of Bishop Lowth and Lindley Murray) was the curriculum until the mid-1960s when language study was broadened to include descriptive grammars, the history of the English language, dialect study, and inquiry approaches; by the mid-1980s, however, language study became narrowly focused on standard usage, once again as an aid to writing and speaking correctly, inquiry approaches to language being largely driven from the curriculum by the discovery of

writing as process and response to literature, perhaps abetted by the various "back to basics" and "why Johnny can't write" movements conceived in the popular press.

The focus of the study reported here is primarily on secondary schools, grades 7 to 13, and limited to studies of English language by native speakers of English, as slippery as that term is to define (see Paikeday, 1985, for example). That is, we have deliberately omitted such studies as modern languages or English as a second language. To establish the context of what we refer to as "the once and future revolution" we begin by examining recent revolutions in the teaching of the other two legs of the traditional English tripod--literature and composition. We see this historical investigation as one step in preparing for the revolution in language awareness: perhaps if we reread our history we can avoid reliving it.

The recent history of the English trivium or tripod--language, literature, and composition--can be viewed as a series or revolutions or paradigm shifts as we have suggested elsewhere (Belanger and Evans 1991). For example a revolution in the teaching of composition which began in the 1960s--partly, at least as a result of the Anglo-American Seminar at Dartmouth in 1966--is by this time well established and good composition classrooms of the 1990s bear little resemblance to their ancestors of the 1950s. Maxine Hairston (1982) traces this revolution on the post-secondary level and draws on Kuhn's (1962) observations about the structure of scientific revolutions to suggest that the teaching of written composition has undergone a "paradigm shift." Summarizing Kuhn's theory,

she reports that

> When a scientific field is going through a stable period, most of the practitioners in the discipline hold a common body of beliefs and assumptions; they agree on the problems that need to be solved, the rules that govern research, and on the standards by which performance is to be measured. They share a conceptual model that Kuhn calls a paradigm, and that paradigm governs activity in the profession...
>
> When several people working in a field begin to encounter anomalies or phenomena that cannot be explained by the established model, the paradigm begins to show signs of instability...when enough anomalies accumulate to make a substantial number of scientists in the field question whether the traditional paradigm can solve many of the serious problems that face them, a few innovative thinkers will devise a new model... This replacement of one conceptual model by another one is Kuhn's <u>paradigm shift</u>. (pp. 76-7)

Hairston documents the progress of the paradigm shift in teaching written composition and notes that by the early 1980s the revolution in the teaching of written composition seemed to be irreversible. The teaching of literature also appears to be in the midst of a paradigm shift as research and teaching practice move away from new critical approaches to literature and toward student response. On the other hand, the teaching of language appears to be firmly rooted in the error-avoidance paradigm established by Lindley Murray during the 18th Century.

There have been, of course, others writing on language awareness in North America recently (e.g., Piper, 1988; Dinan and Root, 1989; Walker, 1985), but for the most part, language is as described by Small and Kelly (1987), "The Forgotten Subject." A brief (and unscientific) survey of two major North American professional journals for teachers of English supports this view.

A twenty-year examination of Canada's English Quarterly reveals that following a brief flurry of articles in the mid-1970's (Gleason's "Language Education for Teachers..."; Pringle's "The Case for Restoring Grammar"; Walker's "Freshman Writing Skills and The Demise of Grammar"; Galloway's "Report on English Language Education in Canada," all in the Fall 1976 issue, all in apparent response to the alleged inability of university freshmen to write academic prose), interest in language education has waned considerably. Of some 500 articles published during this time, only 16 even had language in the title and of these only two dealt with language study in the classroom. A survey of the English Journal (the major professional journal for secondary English teachers in the United States) over the past 12 years reveals only a dozen articles with grammar or language study in the title (excluding whole language). Of these, half deal with traditional grammar or teaching standard usage and the rest run the gamut from a roundtable of mini-lessons on language study outlined in 300 words or less, vocabulary study, middle school spoken language, language and identity and language and power, and McCrum, Cran, and MacNeil's (1987) reflections on the Story of English. The

journal published about 1000 articles in that time (8 issues per year/ 10 articles per issue).

This lack of school interest in language study seems somewhat ironic in light of the commercial interest in language evidenced by the popular press. As Richard Lederer argues in The Miracle of Language (1991):

> The standard Sunday supplement jeremaids tell us of the decline of language...But whatever you may be hearing about the closing of the American mind, there has never been a more passionate moment in the history of the American love affair with language.

Judging by the recent outpouring of popular books on language [Bill Bryson's The Mother Tongue: English & How It Got That Way (1990); William Safire's Coming to Terms (1991); David Crystal's The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language (1991); John Ayto's Bloomsbury Dictionary of Word Origins (1990); the revised edition of James Lipton's An Exaltation of Larks (1991); Paul Beale's paperback edition of Partridge's Concise Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English (1989); John Jacobson's Toposaurus (1990); Martin Manser's The Guinness Book of Words (1988), and Robert Hendrickson's The Henry Holt Encyclopedia of Word and Phrase Origins (1990), to name but a few, and by the popularity of such television programs as the PBS series "The Story of English" in North America] Lederer's enthusiasm about the North American love of language seems to be well grounded.

II. Pre-1965: The Lindley Murray Period

Lindley Murray--described by Gleason (1965) as "an American lawyer of somewhat doubtful patriotism during the Revolution" (p. 70)--laid the foundations for generations of school grammars. In Canada, as in the United States, the legacy of Lindley Murray's English Grammar[1] (1795) and its companion English Exercises[2] is still with us today. As Gleason (1965) points out, in addition to large numbers of "[p]iracies and thinly disguised imitations" English Grammar "went through at least fifty editions, and in abridgment appeared in at least one hundred and twenty more." (p. 71).

As with the learning of Latin as a Second Language which it supplanted, the learning of correct English using Murray's method proceeded rule by rule. For example, in the matter of concord RULE VII states

> When the relative is preceded by two nominatives of different persons, the relative and the verb may agree in person with either, according to the sense: as, "I am the man who command you;" or, "I am the man who commands you." (p. 155).

---

[1]Full title: English Grammar Adapted to the Different Classes of Learners with An Appendix Containing Rules and Observations, for Assisting the More Advanced Students to Write with Perspicuity and Accuracy.

[2]Full title: English Exercises, Adapted to Murray's English Grammar: Consisting of Exercises in Parsing; - Instances of False Orthography; Violation of the Rules of Syntax; - Defects in Punctuation; and Violation of the Rules Respecting Perspicuous and Accurate Writing Designed for the Benefit of Private Learners as Well as for The Use of Schools.

This is followed by two extensive paragraphs in small print with further examples and amplified reasoning, which in turn is supplemented in English Exercises with more than ample opportunity for the student to practice examples illustrating the rule. The character of the text is abstruse, highly technical, absurdly thorough--and, through and through, prescriptive.

For Murray, grammar comes first and writing comes second--in an appendix--, the justification being

> The subjects are very nearly related; and the study of perspicuity and accuracy in writing, appears naturally to follow that of Grammar. (p. 1)

However, Murray does not limit the value of his work to mere grammar but promises in addition both effective communication and a virtuous society:

> ...it is evident, that in proportion to our knowledge of the nature and properties of words, of their relation to each other, and of their established connexion with the ideas to which they are applied, will be the certainty and ease, with which we transfer our sentiments with the minds of one another; and that, without a competent knowledge of this kind, we shall be frequently in hazard of misunderstanding others, and of being misunderstood ourselves.

Speaking of himself in the third person, Murray notes that

> He wishes to promote, in some degree, the cause of virtue, as well as of learning...

and to this end compares his works with those of his

competitors:

> If they [i.e., Murray's principles of selection] were faithfully regarded in all books of education, they would doubtless contribute very materially to the order and happiness of society, by guarding the innocence, and cherishing the virtue, of the rising generation.
>
> (Holdgate, near York, 1795)

In the period before 1965, Canadian textbooks and official ministry of education courses of study often appear to be heavily indebted to Murray for their emphasis on rules, their reams of exercises to reinforce the rules, their relegation of composition to servant of grammar and, indeed, for their focus on the selection of exercises and readings which promote virtue in society. Of course, the lines of demarcation are not in practice so neat as this and what was officially sanctioned depended a good deal on both the program of a given province and the grade level of the students.

A. Pre-1965 Grades 7 and 8 Language Study in Textbooks.

On the grade 7 and 8 levels, the heritage of Murray still holds sway today in one form or another although as early 1952 for a brief period of eight years one approved series of texts used a largely inquiry approach to language teaching. As will be noted below, the programs of study were somewhat more forward looking and such concepts as "incidental" and "functional" grammar were promoted as early as 1938 and in vogue in the 1950s and early 1960s in Ministry of Education guidelines.

Composition and Grammar for Public Schools was the text

--the only approved text--for grades 7 and 8 in Ontario for three decades from 1920 to 1950. Part of the reason for the text's longevity might have been that the Ontario Department of Education held the copyright, but a major contributing factor undoubtedly was the comfort which could be derived from the systematic coverage of Murray's principles. The Preface, for example, reflects Murray's notion that grammar study precedes writing, and, in addition, it promises both comprehensive scope and proper sequence:

> The elements of English Grammar, a knowledge of which is requisite for the clear and correct expression of thought, are introduced early and incorporated in the various chapters on Composition at the proper stages in the development of the subject.

The chapter headings for Chapter 4, "Oral and Written Composition" illustrate this stress:

> (I) The Verb--The Verb Phrase; (II) Number--Person; (III) Agreement; (IV) Stories told in the First Person; (IV) Tense; (VI) Verbs Often Used Incorrectly.

Thus, the "composition" chapters which comprise the first 144 pages of the book are largely grammar exercises. The 126 pages which follow in the "grammar" chapters are, of course, pure grammar. Like Murray's procedures before it, the "writing" task seems to provide a limited rationale to cover a "grammar" topic--linked very loosely with the writing.

Between 1952 and 1954, four new texts were introduced on the grade 7 and 8 levels, three of which gave little more than a nod in the direction of less prescription and less rote

memory, one of which flirts with an inquiry approach to language. The English Practice 7 and 8 series is typical of the texts which spoke of progressive views but taught Murray's grammar. The Preface proclaims:

> Speaking generally, the mastery of English comes through imitation and practice, rather than through the application of rules of grammar. Nevertheless, there must be taught an irreducible minimum of pure grammar chiefly concerned with the functions of words and the structure of the sentence. The purpose of this book is to combine, in a series of daily exercises, practices of the skills of speaking and writing, and the grammar necessary to those skills, without formal definitions or much abstract teaching.

The work is to be carried out in ten units, one per month, in the predictable sequence (chapter titles which are predictable for those who know their Murray): the sentence, using the verb, using the noun, using modifiers, using the adjective and adjective phrase, using adverbs and adverb phrases, using the preposition, using the conjunction, and using the interjection. The approach is strictly prescriptive grammar to which writing is subordinated.

As with texts approved for the 20s, 30s, and 40s, one finds a good deal of uplifting prose along with a grammatical or syntactical challenge as in the following sentences (the task being to "rearrange the sentence putting the adverb [italicized for convenience in the original] first"):

6. The lad went forth blithely, but his mother looked

after him, wistful yet rejoicing that her son should be the hero of all the ages.

7. I will ride with thee to the waste to-morrow, Reyn, if thou wilt; maybe I shall slay thy brother.

In contrast, Words and Ideas, the only one of the four grade 7 and 8 texts of the 1950s to hint at an inquiry approach to language begins with a Foreword to the student (a rarity in itself) which stresses "studying how language works." Chapters 1 to 4, which explore language and its importance, words as symbols, denotation and connotation, and prejudice, seem to have abandoned Murray completely, but Chapter 5 ("The Kinds and Uses of Words") begins with the inevitable "Nouns are name words" and marches through the parts of speech. However, prescriptions are tempered by tentative, conversational phrases: "we normally use..." (p. 88), "most writers would feel..." (p. 90), and "good writers do not usually..." followed by "We do, however, find them using..." (p. 90). And, indeed, usage such as "me and my dad seen" is defined as vulgate but not condemned (p. 104). The authors do, however, quietly warn students about the need to expand linguistic horizons:

> In any case he'll want a good job. He's not likely to get it, however, speaking the way he does...This may not be good, or right, or fair. But it is a fact... (p. 105).

Unfortunately, the creative Words and Ideas series lived a short, eight-year life and disappeared from Circular 14 (the official list of approved texts for Ontario) in 1960 along with its three Murrayian contemporaries. All four were replaced by

the single authorized text Developing Language Skills which became the text for over three decades: approved in 1958, revised in 1978 and remaining approved until 1990, the only approved text for a five-year period and the text of choice for much of the remaining time. It should be noted that the authority of the text was backed up by the fact that its general editor, C.E. Potts, was an inspector of public schools: that provincial inspectors employed a 6-point rating scale for teachers made this a rather heavy stick indeed.

Both the grade 7 and 8 Developing Language Skills books have a two-part division: writing is the first two-thirds and grammar the final one-third, giving the impression that priority is given to writing (it comes first; it has twice the number of pages) and that grammar and rules are subordinate, following writing and applied to it. The Foreword to the Teacher, however, dispels this illusion: three periods per week are suggested for writing and two periods for grammar; writing and language learning continue to be treated in isolation. Teachers are advised in both texts:

> So that pupils may attain mastery of the basic concepts of English grammar which are presented there, the attention of the teacher is drawn to the following:
>
> 1. Grammar must be taught in sequential steps...
> 6. Frequent review and drill lessons are essential in the development of any skill.
> 7. Review exercises are provided here for the convenience of the teacher. Before they are assigned, review lessons are very necessary.

Only one "suggestion" offers seeming relief from the mastery by drill and grill (2. "It [grammar] must be purposeful in that it must be related to the pupils' daily use of language"), but this is inconsistent with the chapter-by-chapter mastery of grammar promoted in "suggestion" 1. Unlike Murray, Potts puts writing in the first part of the book, but like Murray he doesn't seem to believe that students can learn to write without a thorough, sequential mastery of grammar first. What's worse, the grade 8 text repeats exactly the same topics in exactly the same sequence as the grade 7 text. Only the exercises have been changed to protect the reader from boredom deja vu. The text was still on the approved list in 1990.

Even as late as the early 1960s, functional grammar was politically correct (and therefore found in Forewords to textbooks), but real grammar was what sold (and was found in the appendices--if not the bodies--of texts). The Language Comes Alive Series (grade 7 book published in 1961 and the grade 8 in 1965; both approved in 1965) provides a good illustration. The Foreword identifies two controlling principles:

> We do best those things which interest us, and we learn best by doing.

Materials, therefore, are chosen to relate to the "needs, hopes, and dreams" of grade 7 pupils and to stimulate "him" [sic] emotionally and intellectually to "fresh, original, and spontaneous writing," which leads to this striking feature:

> [I]t accounts for the lack of emphasis on formal grammar and on formal exercises. It is futile to assume that a

> knowledge of the rules of grammar will ensure facility in expression any more than the rules of hockey will turn one into a good player. Only those rules and technical terms which are necessary for the detection and elimination of ambiguities and solecisms are included.

By 1965, the grade 8 Foreword is somewhat less dismissive of grammar:

> The grammatical patterns that have been developed are those that occur in his [sic] writing and are, therefore, necessary for an accurate transmission of thoughts.

In contrast, the contents of the text flails away at grammar and mechanics: the first unit opens with capitalization and punctuation, the parts of the sentence, and the noun. Unit two, although it begins with reporting, slides into verbs, compound subjects, plurals of nouns and pronouns and then into subjects and objects, subjective completions, etc. In summary, the "grammatical" assumptions and the assumptions about the nature of language remain much as in other texts. Grammatical analysis is the traditional Latinate grammar, complete with parsing activities.

Textbooks for the Senior Grades.

The pattern followed in grades 7 and 8 is largely the pattern found in the later grades, 9 through 13: Murray's mastery of correct usage is never very far beneath the surface, language study beyond correct usage usually has something to do with the naming of parts, and some of the textbooks are

beginning work on their third generation of students (e.g., the four editions of Mastering Effective English reach from 1940 to 1991, with a brief hiatus between 1971 and 1981). One major difference was that the senior English curriculum (grades 11, 12, and 13) was virtually frozen under the spell of the grade 13 departmental examinations until 1967 while the departmentals at grade 8, 10, and 12 were phased out in the 1940s.

B. Pre-1960's Programs of Study.

The 1938 "Programme of Studies for Grades VII and VIII of the Public and Separate Schools" of Ontario can be read in places as a strong movement away from Murray. Instead of focusing on writing and speaking correctly, the guide begins with

> The primary aim of the classroom work in English is to develop in the students a genuine and abiding love of good reading. Experienced teachers agree that other things being equal, the students who read widely have better ability in language and a richer store of useful general information than those who read only the prescribed texts. (p. 25)

The authors acknowledge the debate between those who "wish to give the corrective practices to all students" and others who "claim that to give students drills designed to correct errors they do not make is sheer waste of time." (p. 27) However, they leave no doubt on which side they stand:

> Teachers will notice that in accordance with the views of writers on educational psychology and on the teaching of English, and in conformity with the

> practice elsewhere in the English speaking world, grammar as a separate "subject" does not appear in this program. Because this is a departure from the practice followed for many years in the elementary schools of Ontario, it may be wise to indicate the reasons for this change. (p. 27)

The authors trace English grammar to its Latin roots and note that

> The structure of the English language, however, is very different from that of a highly inflexional language such as Latin. The early English grammars were seriously defective because they attempted to explain the structure of the English language in terms of forms and modes of expression which were peculiar to Latin. (p. 28)

On the other hand, the guide acknowledges that grammar can serve a useful purpose in "the training of children in Grades VII and VIII" if it is a grammar "of function, not form, or, as Jespersen calls it, 'descriptive.'" And the program of studies quotes Jespersen:

> When grammar 'instead of serving as a guide to what <u>should</u> be said or written, aims at finding out what <u>is</u> actually said and written by the speakers of the language, it may lead to a scientific understanding of the rules followed instinctively by speakers and writers.' (p. 29).

Of course, these almost-heretical notions were not compatible with contents of <u>the</u> approved text or the departmental

examination and they disappeared from the program of studies without a trace in 1940; on the other hand, the text, Composition and Grammar for Public Schools, plodded on for another decade. In addition, the Jespersen quotation was one of the casualties of the 1940 revision and the citing of an actual authority on language was not seen in programs of study again until the Intermediate English Guideline in 1969.

In addition, there were some mixed messages in the 1938 guide which also proclaimed that by the end of grade 10:

> a pupil of average intelligence should know all the grammar he needs to know to speak and write correctly.

This is clearly not the grammar of Jespersen, and although "functional" grammar was touted, what the term came to mean in textbook practice is what the "best" writers do as delivered unto us by authorities such as the Fowler Brothers, and even this is tempered by statements such as "pupils should become acquainted through daily use" with common grammatical terminology and students should "become familiar with such grammatical terms as commonly prove useful." How this familiarity is to be gained and how usefulness is determined are not clarified.

Additionally, the replacement section in 1940 and following stresses that "individualized corrective exercises with an emphasis on repetition" are to be applied to students exhibiting a need "to ensure habitual use." Although the rule-exercise-drill-test routine is downplayed somewhat, it remains just below the surface as a methodology to be reverted to

whenever pupils exhibit non-mastery.

Senior Courses of Study

On the senior level the 1938 program suggestions were somewhat less oracular in tone, less definitive in content, and more enduring in the program of studies if not in the textbooks and examinations than those for the junior level were. The 1942 Guideline for grades 9 to 12, for example, continues to emphasize functional grammar:

> Grammar is too often thought of merely as a set of rules to be obeyed if one wants to speak and write correctly. Such prescriptive or formal grammar is useful and perhaps necessary for the beginner in a foreign language, but for our own language a descriptive grammar that points out what is actually said and written in our accepted current usage and that explains why the usage is what it is, will serve us best in the teaching of English. Grammar should be mainly functional and so provide a reasoned help for Composition...

The Guideline was liberal and functional; the textbooks were conservative and prescriptive; the grade 13 examination overruled all else.

Between 1942 and 1969, programs of study for Ontario were (a) remarkably brief, and (b) reprinted annually with little change.

On the Senior level, the program of study (S.25) said that "more emphasis should be placed on speaking and writing with a purpose than on text-book exercises in the mechanics of

compositions," but the texts and examinations presented a different message. Indeed, though the focus of the program is not on "grammar," familiarity with grammar is everywhere assumed. The program demanded that the student "be able to use English clearly, correctly, and agreeably" and notes that "if these qualities are to be acquired, a command of correct usage and abundant practice in oral and written work are essential." As for the method: "Regular attention should be given to...clausal analysis of sentences in order to give the pupil an understanding of the connection between clear thought and correct form." In writing, form was "neatness, legibility, proper layout, and correct capitalization and punctuation."

At grade 11, the course of study is sequenced as follows: word study, punctuation, grammar, sentences, paragraphs, essays, letters, precis, and logic. Lindley Murray probably wouldn't object to the logic of the sequence that one first knows "words" and then one can write "the sentence" but not before learning how the words go together (grammar) and how they are separated (punctuation). The watchwords for punctuation are "insistence on correctness" and "instruction and practice" while grammar focusses on

> Analysis--Review and further practice as an aid to good sentence structure and the effective expression of thought, and
>
> The application of the principles of grammar to the achievement of correct usage.

Almost certainly there is one "grammar"; further, effective

thinking is impossible without earlier and well-drilled grammar.

C. The Grade 13 Department of Education Examination.

Of the three major influences of what is taught in the name of language--the textbook, the official program of studies, and the departmental examinations--the latter are clearly paramount. Until 1965, examinations in English consisted of two 2 1/2 hour papers, one in English Composition and one in English Literature, combined to provide 100 percent of the student's mark in Grade 13 English. The Course of Studies (1957 edition which is cited here and was not revised until 1968) lists what the "Departmental examination in English Composition may test:"

> A short essay [modes neither defined nor delimited], a precis, a critical evaluation [i.e., "appreciation"] of a prose passage and one or more of the following:
>
> i. explain the effects of specific clauses, phrases, and create expanded sentences.
>
> ii. correct sentences that contain faulty grammar or incorrect use of words and give the reasons for these corrections.
>
> iii. explain the meaning of words and use them correctly in sentences.

What is to be taught as language is evident in the Department of Education's standards for grading the essay and the negative premium paid to error.

> The essay shall be judged on its merit, and penalized for errors.

In a refinement of malice, a distinction is made between major and minor errors, but each has devastating consequences:

> Unless there are compensating merits, three major errors of different types, many examples of a single major error, or frequent minor errors of different types, should put the essay below fifty percent.

That three major errors in one demand essay could (and did) result in failure for an entire year's work leaves little to the imagination about the focus of language study in grade 13 (and, of course, in the preparatory years of grades 11 and 12). In addition, the language of the "standards" provided by the Department speaks volumes: "serious defects," "careless shifts" [presumably careful ones were not sins], "failure to...," "illiteracies and crudities;" and in the "common defects" department "the comma blunder," "a great many students are incapable of...," "dubious usage," "unsuitable expressions," and "...almost as bad as a slangy one." A strong association of "good" English with "right values is also clear; the student who engages in colloquial usage, who "carelessly shifts," etc. is a slovenly student and very likely a student whose moral credentials are in need of attention. Hello, Lindley Murray.

Furthermore, mere ability to use language correctly does not gain full marks, as the post mortem on the 1955 Examination notes:

> It is not sufficient that language be used correctly; the rules must also be learned.

The Province of Alberta

Murray's hold was also strong in the Province of Alberta, despite attempts to promote more progressive views. Walker (1985), for example, in his study of "Grammar Teaching in Alberta, 1905-1985," points out that despite a 1922 curriculum revision that downplayed grammar and a course of studies which claimed that "grammar should be descriptive not legislative since language is a living thing 'in constant change and growth'" (p. 28), the grammar text remained prescriptive and the government examinations focussed on parts of speech, parsing, and sentence analysis well into the mid-1930s. By 1935, Alberta's new, progressive Social Credit government wanted progressive education and the National Council of Teachers of English <u>An Experience Curriculum</u> (1935) with its functional or instrumental grammar and its emphasis on social uses of language seemed to fill the bill, becoming the official Ministry of Education policy. However, former Deputy Minister of Education Dr. T.C. Byrne noted that he didn't think that "progressive ideas percolated too far into the classrooms" and by 1947 "Formal grammar seemed to make something of a comeback."

III. The Revolution that Fizzled.

As noted above, as early as 1938 Ontario curricula showed hints of expanding language teaching beyond the residue of Murray's rules and exercises. However, at least three major forces--programs of studies, textbooks, and department of education examinations[1]--drive the curriculum, and since only the program of studies in 1938 hinted at enlightenment, this philosophical stance had little chance of succeeding. As will be noted below, on the grade 7 and 8 level, the light disappeared without a trace from the 1940 program of studies.

However, by the mid-1960s--the era that we feel was the beginning of the potential revolution in the teaching of language in secondary schools--all three major forces were beginning to line up on the side of enlightenment:

--three new series of textbooks broke out of the Murray mold.

--programs of study began to include more generous aims for language study.

--department of education examinations had been phased out across Canada beginning in the lower grades in the 1940s, and even the dreaded grade 13 examination was about to fall in Ontario.

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[1]Obviously a large number of other forces also influence the curriculum-as-taught: school traditions; expectations of teachers, students, administrators, and parents; inservice opportunities for teachers; teacher training; school inspectors; the power and inclinations of the leadership of the English department; personalities on local school boards; the demands, real or perceived, of colleges and universities; and media crusades against the evils of bad grammar which seem to reach a crescendo about once each decade, to name but a few.

Combined with the general feeling that the grammars of Jespersen, Fries, and Chomsky and the work on dialect study by Cassidy in the U.S. and Scargill in Canada would enlighten and amuse students, these forces suggested that language study in the secondary schools was on the threshold of a revolution. Indeed, the American position at the Dartmouth Conference focussed strongly on the study of language.

While the official Ministry guidelines in Ontario did not arrive at the grammar purge until 1969 (which coincided with the demise of the English 13 provincial examination), textbooks approved as early as 1965 broadened language study to include linguistics, the history of English, and standard English as a dialect. However, it should also be noted that unlike the monolithic school grammars of previous decades, the new language programs were in keen competition with traditional grammar and usage study both within the programs of study and among the approved textbooks. The revolution was never a sure thing--or even a good bet.

A. Programs of Study of the Brief Enlightenment.

1. Ontario Guidelines. On the grade 7 and 8 level, the "Intermediate English, 1969" guideline was the Ministry's first official message since 1951, and could be regarded as the grammar purge. The guideline offered such positions on grammar as:

> There is no significant correlation between the teaching of formal grammar and the improvement of a student's use of English. (p. 5. Note: not just the improvement of written composition.)

> ...no major effort has yet emerged to suggest that any formal study of a linguistic grammar will improve a student's speaking and writing. (p. 6)

Indeed, a far more comprehensive view of language study emerges:

> These broader aspects [register, structure, history, and development of language are specified] might be studied on an elective basis... (p. 6)

By 1977, however, the pendulum is moving in the other direction:

> Students must be led to think objectively about their language.
>
> In this way they can be helped to improve the effectiveness of their use of language; to study language changes and differences; to develop an understanding of language and how it works... (p. 6)

This is certainly not back to the justification of drill and grill of the Latinate grammar, but it isn't the brave new world of "what turns the student on is where it's at" of the revolutionary school either.

2. British Columbia Guidelines. Contrasting 1961 senior B.C. curriculum guide with the 1964 junior guide reveals a substantial change in orientation to language study. The introductory sections of the 1961 document promote a wholly mechanistic approach to language teaching:

> In all grades the fundamental elements of simple sentence structure, such as subject, predicate, object, complement, clauses, phrases, parts of speech &

> relations, should be reviewed and stressed...In all grades the teaching & review of correct English usage & expression should form an important part of the English course. Teachers of all subjects must insist upon a high standard of oral and written expression even to the extent of penalizing the student in informal classroom tests (p. 12).

The purpose of language study is illustrated in the suggestions for "sentence building" exercises, which appear late in the prescribed text, following extensive sentence analysis: students examine the sentence pattern in examples, complete a series of drills and then "use such sentences in their creative writing projects."

The Grade 12 B.C. guide has the "Main Objective" of "mastery of the writing skills" which is elaborated on as:

> The main objective carries certain logical consequences. A skill, first, is amenable to analysis. Grammar, for example is essentially "language science" ... There is also a science basic to sentence, paragraph, and essay composition which should be organized and taught as a science. (p. 96).

"Science" here seems to mean a closed or complete system; it seems further to mean an absence of ambiguity. All of these sciences should be taught--and it seems likely by rule-example-drill. Lastly, the science would seem also to be <u>authority</u>, another feature of a closed system. There is nothing here to imply growth or discovery, but rather a finished system most satisfactorily embraced within a text such as <u>Mastering</u>

Effective English (1950), concerning which we are assured that:

> The revised edition of Mastering Effective English provides a complete handbook of the principles of grammar and correct usage...and sufficient practice exercises... (p. 100)

Indeed, the 1961 document makes little concession to the practice of "incidental" grammar which was popular elsewhere at the time:

> However, the teaching of grammar as incidental to composition and only as errors arise is not likely to prove completely satisfactory in providing a working concept of the structure of the English language...The student should be given in a planned and orderly way the science of the English language...knowledge...classified in some sort of logical system...corrective work, however important, is no substitute for systematic work in grammar.

In 1964, on the junior secondary level, a very different view of the place and purpose of grammar is found:

> There is a lack of convincing evidence that the formal and descriptive study of a grammar of any type will measurably increase the ability of young people to write better, although it is conceded that a knowledge of grammar may help more mature writers to perfect their styles. (p.6)

The text for grades 9 and 10 was Penner and McConnell's (1963) Learning English, a text which placed considerable emphasis on language history and change and on inductive approaches to

grammatical analysis rather than memorization of terms.

> Grammarians once thought that language was built on logical and unchangeable "rules", and that a study of grammar meant a study of how a language should work. Modern grammarians know that all living languages change and that no language is completely logical. (p. 185)

Other features, of both the text and the Ministry document, emphasize language change, usage and usage change, language history, and registers of language. However, the curriculum guide does make concessions to more traditional views:

> This chapter (Learning About English Grammar--Part I) should be taught as a concentrated unit, with full attention to the oral and written exercises. The chapter is intended to give a sounder theoretical basis for the description of the English language. (p. 25)

During this time the relationship between grammar and composition was also viewed in a different light, hinting at the "writing as process" movement which was yet to come. For example, the 1964 guide emphasizes (by underlining) the following quotation from NCTE's journal, College English (1962):

> Composition is not just a practical skill, not a mere bag of tricks, but rather an important way to order experience, to discover ideas and render them more precise, and to give them effective iterance. It is intimately related to thought itself. (p. 9)

Rather than frequent grammar and usage exercises, this program demanded frequent writing opportunities.

B. Textbooks of the Brief Enlightenment.

Despite the fact that programs of study developed a broader and more generous conception of language teaching and learning during the mid-1960s, the textbooks which supported these new programs did not always share their conception of language teaching although, ironically, the same Ministry that wrote the guides approved the textbooks. In addition, texts which appeared to embrace the new programs (e.g., the Language Matters series or Learning English) coexisted with those which were clearly of a different era (e.g., Developing Language Skills or Language Comes Alive). A third set of texts simply avoided the grammar/language study question by ignoring language completely or bungling it (e.g., Creative English or Starting Points in Language). For purposes of illustration, we focus on the texts used in the junior secondary, but the picture is not much different at the senior secondary, and where it does differ, the balance tips toward the conservative (e.g., Mastering Effective English, the grade 12 and 13 text, is a good deal more rigorous in its grammar program than is the grade 7 and 8 series, Developing Language Skills).

One other important factor to emerge at this time is the move towards decentralization and local responsibility, a move which is reflected in the large number of approved texts. On the grades 9 and 10 levels, for example, although there was no new guideline or policy position from the Ministry between 1964 and 1967, five further texts or series were approved for language and composition. Following the 1969 "grammar purge" guideline five additional texts were approved and by 1974,

offering teachers a total of eighteen texts or series on the approved list, many, quite curiously, with a Latinate grammar basis.

1. Grammar Oriented Texts.

Developing Language Skills, noted earlier as the only grade 7 and 8 text approved for a period between 1960 and 1965 and one of the approved texts until 1990, was generally out of step to some degree with the program of studies and at times marching in a completely opposite direction. During the functional grammar period which culminated in the mid-1960s, DLS was barely hiding a sequential grill-and-drill program behind the banner of incidental grammar.

Having survived the grammar purge of the 1969 program of studies unscathed, DLS went through the 1970s incompatible with the official Ministry position, and responded in 1977 to the 'grammar's back' program with a somewhat modified revision. Although the 1978 revision has an initial 78 page section on "Communication and Creative Writing," over 70 percent of the book is devoted to Part II ("The Mechanics of Writing, pp. 79 to 178, described by the authors as "practical and skills oriented") and Part III ("Grammar Handbook," pp. 179-273).

The revised edition has an opening chapter, "The Language of Communication," which explores signs and symbols, sender/receiver, the pictorial (the weather forecast), and advertising. It is not "scholarly," but it at least implies registers and language selected in relation to purpose with numerous activities and writing opportunities.

The bulk of the revision, however, would be comfortable in a much earlier decade. Entitling Part II "The Mechanics of Writing" is at best somewhat misleading: the section opens with "The Word" (inclusive of a review of "Parts of Speech"), moves to "The Sentence" (the four kinds, etc.), shifts to "The Paragraph" (four types, of course) and concludes with two chapters, one on "Writing Conversation" (the bulk of which concerns correct punctuation of dialogue) and "The Steps in Writing" (offering such sterling advice as "Margins should be left on all four sides of the paper" and "The left margin should be kept straight. The right margin is harder to keep straight...").

Part III, "The Grammar Handbook" is not a handbook at all in the sense of a glossary and compilation, but a course in traditional grammar. The authors advise in the Introduction that the section could be used either as "an extension of Part II, or as a self-contained unit for the study of language." A 99-page "unit" indeed. The authors are somewhat more candid in their admission that:

> The material in this section is structured and sequential. The content is arranged in a logical and progressive order, so that students must know one element before they can move to the next. Students need to master this material in order to progress to the more advanced work of the next grade.

Good bye to the fiction of an integrated English program and the principle of "functional" grammar. Hello Lindley Murray.

It is difficult to tell why a textbook so out of tune

with the official curriculum could remain approved for such an extended time. Perhaps its longevity on the approved list in apparent contravention of the program of studies can be attributed to its blatant presentation of what most parents and many teachers truly believe language and grammar is, way down deep, and what they really believe is the right way to teach it: by rule, illustration, and exercise, after exercise, after exercise. On the other hand, perhaps it simply was that the ghost of Her Majesty's School Inspector Potts held more sway than the enlightenment of the young turks in the Ministry.

2. Texts Avoiding or Bungling Language Studies

Creative English 7 and Creative English 8 decried past practices of language study which meant "exercises in applying the rules or principles governing spoken and written English" and instead claimed in the Introduction that

> Language development must involve all of the so-called language arts--reading, spoken and written language, spelling, listening, and literature--for the development of each is closely related to experience in the others.

In addition, the authors proclaim

> Although a knowledge of mechanics and grammar is an essential part of language, it must be gained through the use of language in purposeful communication.

In practice, this means that language is really not mentioned, not introduced at all. Concerning parts of speech, for example, the index to the grade seven text gives four individual page references to adjectives, two to adverbs, one

to the conjunction, two to nouns and one to prepositions. The grade 8 text also includes the gerund. In each case the terms receive mention, but there is no grammar component, no analysis, no rules with exercises, no sentences for correction, not even a handbook as an appendix. There is so little reference to language in the series that one would be hard-pressed to describe this as an integrated language program, the authors' introduction notwithstanding.

In 1974, five years after the grammar purge in the official Ministry guideline, the Starting Points in Language series was approved for grades 7 and 8, the only series approved at this level between the 1969 and 1977 guideline revisions. The 1980 revisions of this series are still on the approved list.

According to the Introduction--addressed to students, not teachers--language is learned by using it, manipulating it. And for those in need of guidance, there is a Handbook at the back of the book:

> Here we have put all those important mechanics of language--grammatical terms, punctuation rules, proofreading hints, and so on. If you have any doubt on this score, simply look it up in the Handbook.

As it turns out, the Handbook is 22 pages of very large print, alphabetized from "Abbreviations" (the rule and illustrations) though "Punctuation" (including eight rules for the comma), to "Writing, Styles of" (an almost medieval series of definitions of four modes: description, narration, exposition, and argument. One wonders if the irony of "all those important

mechanics of language" is intended by the author. The claim that these matters are important is trivialized both in tone and execution.

This absence of attention to the structure of English is consonant with the 1969 Guideline which although it concedes that the study of structure, along with language history and "levels," is worthwhile, such study is reduced to an "elective basis." (p. 6) However, Starting Points in Language does contain a number of activities around the nature of language. For example, the text provides a reflection by Mario Pei on how language may have begun, offers some theories in simplified, humorous form, and proposes some empirical activities such as taping a baby's sounds. Early forms of writing are discussed and activities suggested around how people change register in their use of language. This, in turn, is followed by the March Hare's famous reflection on language and meaning, and leads to a discussion of signs and symbols. While these and other activities provide the potential for a good deal of interesting work with language, no coherent language program appears (nor, for that matter, is there evidence of a coherent writing program). The units are largely collages of pictures and almost miscellaneous activities bridged with a good deal of chatter and with little surface evidence, at least, of any coordination or thrust. It is quite unclear what will be learned by the student and what the student might be held reasonably accountable for learning.

The 1980 Revision of SPL reduces the Handbook from 22 to 10 pages and uses headings such as "Learning to Build

Sentences" (the content of which is: lists and underlines subjects and predicates; the four kinds of sentences illustrated; brief verb declensions; and sentence combining [which turns out to be definitions and illustrations of compound and complex sentences, not comprehensive programs such as those by O'Hare discussed below]). The Teacher's Guide for the series, published in 1983 lists "Beliefs Concerning Language in SPL," only one of which seems to be closely related to language study per se: "A language program must teach essential skills of written communication." Perhaps this is merely a cosmetic claim bowing to the pressure of the "Why Johnny Can't Write" commotion of the mid-1970s and the consequent swing of the good usage pendulum. In any case, nothing in either edition of the SPL series has anything to do with teaching these essential skills. The revision makes a nod in the direction of coherence by adding headings preceding activities so that the student and teacher will have some idea of the principal target of the sequence.

3. Language Inquiry Texts.

During the 1960s and early 1970s, two new textbooks and two new series in the inquiry mode were approved. These texts treated language as an object of study and interest rather than a tool to improve communication or chances of success in society. Penner and McConnell's Learning English was the first and consequently the most conservative and grammar oriented, although the "grammar" was based on current linguistic knowledge of the time rather than Murray's legacy. The Language Matters series by Shephard, MacDonald, Coman in

five volumes appeared to be intended for a junior-senior secondary sequence. It was the most jazzy, collagy, McLuhanesque, and paid the most attention to writing. McDougal and Littel's Language of Man series was the most American (and therefore failed to make the approved list in Ontario). Penner and McConnell's Learning Language was the most language oriented book, the most scholarly, and paid the least attention to writing. In addition, Scargill and Penner's Looking at Language provided senior secondary students with essays on language by Canadian scholars.

Penner and McConnell's Learning English (1963; B.C. approval 1964; Ontario approval 1967) is of interest because it was the first of a number of texts on the junior and senior secondary level which stressed inquiry into language. Revised substantially and re-titled Learning Language in 1977, it remained approved in Ontario until 1989 (even then deleted, perhaps, because of the recent, unofficial Ontario rule of delisting texts after ten years on the approved list).

Learning English, being a transition book, had the appearance of being traditional. Chapters chiefly concerned with writing were interwoven with very extensive chapters on spelling (50 pages), punctuation (24 pages), sentence building (60 pages), and two consecutive chapters on grammar, ominously labelled "Part One" and "Part Two" occupying 108 pages, suggesting that Learning English will be much of the same old "correct and give the reason" procedures found in its predecessors. This is supported by an apparent almost desperate effort to be comprehensive and complete: all the

grammar, usage, word confusions, spellings, and exceptions you'll ever need--all tucked neatly into the text rather than appended.

The critical change from previous language texts, however, is the view of language and, derivatively, of grammar. As the Preface notes:

> The text is designed to promote the interaction of two kinds of experience: the study about English (its historical development, its vast and changing vocabulary, its characteristic structures) and the active involvement in speaking and writing English. (p. vi; emphasis in the original)

And study "about" English it does, along dimensions of language and language change that few other texts touch on. For example, the opening chapter discusses the history of English with illustration of Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, the influence of the Norman Conquest with an interesting exercise in connotation of French-derived versus English words (as in help, aid; gift, donation). Other language borrowings are illustrated and the notion of language levels with respect to vocabulary is introduced.

The concluding chapter, "Learning about Usage," focusses on misused expressions. While it is laid out largely in "handbook" format, it nevertheless consistently notes register and debatable usage, signaled by an introductory quotation by Robert Pooley:

> Good English is that form of speech which is appropriate to the purpose of the speaker, true to the

> language as it is, and comfortable to the speaker and listener. It is the product of custom, neither cramped by rule nor freed from all restraint; it is never fixed, but changes with the organic life of the language.

To this Penner and McConnell add:

> There are no absolute rules about "right and wrong" or "correct" English. "Standard English is a loose term, and your choice of an expression depends upon your sensitivity to what is appropriate in each situation. Standard English ranges from the language of books, of literature, of complex ideas, to the language used for small talk by educated people. (p. 453)

In the listings and exercises that follow, judgments vary from

--Absolute prohibition: of for have

--Recognition of shifting tolerance ("In formal English the differentiation...is made. The distinction is disappearing in spoken English"): can for may

--Full acceptance: "There is no reason why like can't be used as a conjunction").

Obviously these "permissions" are in one sense as arbitrary as the prohibitions of the earlier "authorities," but clearly they are represented for the most part as present advice in a changing language world. The critical point is that language is being viewed and judged, for the most part empirically, on the basis of real use and not just arbitrary authority. However, as the authors point out in the Preface, this is not a call for linguistic anarchy:

> The aim here is to encourage a sensitivity to what is best in the language. Standards do exist, and a liberal attitude to language does not mean a lack of discipline and discrimination. (p. viii)

This empirical view of language and the recognition of various scholarly explorations of language in general and of English in particular extends to grammar:

> In a time when ideas of grammar are changing, the treatment of grammar in Learning English can be thought of as transitional, moving in the direction of greater accuracy in the description of language. These chapters are a modest attempt to place the study of grammar upon a sounder theoretical basis. The material combines modern linguistic insights with some of the traditional ideas the authors consider still valid. The authors believe, however, that this material is closer to the facts of the language than anything now used generally in Canadian high schools. The aim is not to teach terms and definitions, but to promote the discovery by the students of the way English language works and its characteristic structures. some teachers may want to extend this inductive reaching beyond the treatment in the text.

While the claim to be "closer to the facts" may seem immodest, it is simply a fact. In addition, the terms "discovery" and "inductive" clearly signal a new perspective for student and teacher on language, one consistent with the authors' view that language study can be exciting and fresh. Good news, indeed.

Unlike some of the texts discussed above which are liberal in the Preface but authoritative in the body, the substance of the grammar chapters in Learning English avoids simple prescriptions. In the opening of the first of the grammar chapters, the authors, using simple illustrations of word order, remind the student that she/he already knows a great deal of grammar, for it is a system and a system that the student has long used. English grammar is simply defined initially as "a description of what goes on inside the English sentence" (p. 181). There follows an extended note illustrating changing understandings of grammar with examples of Latin (inflected) contrasted with English, the point being that our old Latinate description of English is largely inappropriate. "Modern English grammars [note the plural] discard much old terminology, and emphasize only what applies to English."

In conclusion to the discussion of grammars, we find a short note (pp. 184-85) entitled "What Grammar is Not." Here the distinction is made between usage and grammar. An illustration, concerning sentence patterns, contrasts English and Inuktitut, drawing on Edmund Carpenter's work in the 1950s examining the relationship between language and thought among Canada's Inuit.

Learning Language (1979) is not a mere revision of Learning English, but a change in focus: language is the object of study and the book is as close to a "linguistics" text as one can find designed for the secondary school--then or since. There is a good deal of emphasis on empirical discovery and

greater attention is given to Canadian English. Writing, which was about 20 percent of Learning English drops to 15 percent, with such items as the longer composition, the report, spelling, and the use of the library deleted.

Unlike earlier conceptions of language teaching which begin with a body of material to be mastered, Learning Language starts with the learner:

> We now know for sure where we should begin. The starting point is not, as in the past, with a pre-packaged set of language items to be imposed on students from without, and often isolated from the world of language around them and within them. A modern text must start with and build on the students' human need for language, their unique and inherent linguistic ability, and their natural curiosity about language, rather than with the language we think they need.
>
> (Preface)

And begin with the student they do: the Introduction includes an activity on students' surnames; Chapter 2 addresses "words...of ourselves and our origins: North American English; Chapter 3 deals with Words, Words, Words--how words evolve and change; and Chapter 8: Language in Use: Varieties of English," again from the viewpoint of how usage changes--and some of the rules--many of the rules.

However, despite the emphasis on discovery and empirical investigation, there remains a good deal of telling--of setting out information for the student to imbibe. As with Learning English, the text shows an almost desperate effort to be

comprehensive and complete, one of its major difficulties as a school text. Although the authors suggest that it is designed for a one-year course, the text contains much too much for a one-year course. In addition, since the focus is substantially on language, the other legs of the tripod--literature and composition--must be learned elsewhere.

Two other language study series--McDoubal and Littell's Language of Man (1972) and the Nelson series, Language Matters (six volumes between 1971 and 1975)--were also approved in the mid-1970's. Four books of the Language Matters series were approved in Ontario between 1972 and 1984, in practice one each for grades 9 to 12. The focus is obviously language and the many contexts of language use, but unlike Learning Language, writing receives fairly generous attention in all of the books in the series. The texts are jazzy--montage-like, McLuhanesque. There is a good deal on elements of language, history, oral language, language change, register, and an enormous variety of material: newspapers, comic strips and cartoons, advertisements, recipes, and literary poetry and prose--from a strong Canadian slant. Students are peppered with questions and there is a wide range of open-ended activity, individual and group. Across the various volumes there are studies of usage, appropriateness, register, language history, lexicography, and language abuse. It is an inquiry approach: students are encouraged to investigate use, to question "authority."

Grammar Is..., the most traditional title in the series is also the most traditional in structure: parts of speech (one

by one), the sentence, usage problems (with checklist), sentence-combining, sentence patterns, paragraph patterns, and so on. It attempts on exploration into various contemporary grammatical theories even though it announces early that there are various "grammars" out there. Nonetheless,the authors manage to have a lot of fun, and in most respects the layout of the text resembles that of the texts in the main series: plenty of advertisements and pictorial stimuli, experimentation with the rules, etc. Effectiveness of language choice and sentence style in a variety of contexts receives a good deal of attention. The student is fairly consistently invited to reflect and to judge for him\herself.

The McDougal-Littel Language of Man series was approved in part in B.C. but not in Ontario. The approach greatly resembles that of the Language Matters series, both in content and format. Since it was not approved for use in Ontario, a province with over one-third of Canada's population or about half of Canada's non-Francophone population, the McDougal-Littel series was not influential in the language revolution.

Ruth McConnell's Our Own Voice: Canadian English and How It Is Studied (1979) brought a systematic study of Canadian dialects and the history of Canadian English to the secondary school. McConnell did not envisage it as a "text for students to 'work through' for memorizing and being tested on facts. It is resource book, a source of information and ideas for students to dip into, find an interest, and then begin their own investigations." (p. v) She also suggests that certain sections (Chapter 4 on dialects, for example) which "become

rather technical in places...may be omitted, studied partially, or left to the last."

The topics of the book's five chapters are: introductory to Canadian English; Canadian word-making; dialect; the study of dialects; and regional variations. She draws from the 1971 Survey of Canadian English at numerous points, inviting the student to examine the data. One edition contains a "Handbook" which suggests exercises and projects for the student, keyed to sections of the main text. In one sense,then, this is not a book "about" language but a resource for genuine language investigation by the student. It takes language as the object of empirical investigation seriously and it takes the student seriously.

During this period, a new Grade 11 text (Scargill and Penner, Looking at Language [1966]) took the "essays for discussion" approach to teaching language. Fourteen essays written by Canadian scholars with topics ranging from the history of English to dictionary study to usage to three models of grammar to magic words and dialect study presented students with a scholarly overview of a range of language topics, each followed by a number of topics for discussion. Each essay provided, in effect, a mini lecture on a topic of language study. The topics for discussion provided something to do with the material, but it is obvious that the text required a fairly sophisticated level of teacher ability to handle language study, one which it appears most teachers lacked (and probably still lack).

C. Counter-revolutionary forces. Traditionally, literature

study was a separate course and did not compete with language study for a place in the classroom, but language and composition were often taught together in the same course, vying with each other for class time. Even such language-oriented books as the Language Matters series discussed above had a very strong composition component and it was not until Penner and McConnell's Learning Language appeared in 1977 that language study itself became a major focus in the curriculum. It was not a major retreat, therefore, for textbooks--especially under the influence of the writing process movement--to re-emphasize composition at the expense of language study. The two major composition textbooks/series of the mid-1980s (Robinson et al's Bridges and Parker's The Writer's Workshop) did just that.

The four books of Robinson et al's Bridges series are designed to cover grades 7 to 10. Bridges 1 is almost totally given over to the writing process with two final Resource chapters, one entitled "Grammar" (including nouns, verbs and sentences, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositions as subtitles) and one entitled "Sentence Combining." Language is almost never mentioned within the text except for a couple of curious little exercises which ask students to " Write down a list of ten interesting verbs (action words)," "make up a list of adverbs," "Write down lists of colourful nouns," and "make up a list of adjectives," without definition of the terms or instruction in their use and without much follow-up. (pp. 122-25) On the other hand, Bridges 4 devotes four chapters to such topics as language change, public doublespeak, language

history, and "grammar," along with a resource chapter on "usage." Neither of these approaches has a language focus which is perhaps one reason for the emergence of the "Handbook" on the side. At this time, language study has not been very successful in competing for teachers' time in the classroom.

One of the most successful texts on the market today, Parker's (1982) The Writer's Workshop devotes 200 pages to instruction in various writing genre, almost 200 additional pages to an "Activities" section which deals with rhetorical and stylistic matters and editorial usage, and a further 100 pages of Labs on such items as sentence patterns, verbal phrases, parallelism, and loose and periodic sentences. As the title promises, the focus is writing and all language study is limited to that which relates to writing.

D. A Glimmer of Hope: The Quebec "Secondary School Curriculum Guide: English Language Arts: Language" (1983).

One of the premises of the guide is that

> One's mother tongue is learned primarily in the process of one's using it, not by being taught about it...Such knowledge is ot merely given to us; it is built up by our drawing from our vast experience with language. We live in and through language; we build our world through language; and it is this living and doing in and with language that contributes to our "tacitly held" knowledge of language. (p. 1)

The program objectives are to help students:

--explore their knowledge of language

--examine their intuitions and assumptions about

language

--develop a greater awareness of the ways language is used and functions around them.

--understand the origins and development of the English language and to look with greater curiosity at language

--recognize, appreciate, and respect differences in language and dialect

--gain greater control over language through an increased awareness of and sensitivity to the ways language is used and functions around them.

Interesting in terms of the case for the revolution that failed, almost all of the books listed in this guide--both school and scholarly texts--were published in the 1960s and 1970s, suggesting, as we claim, that the revolution in North America fizzled in the 1980s.

E. Four Additional Influences.

Although there were many other influences on the language curriculum and the above catalogue makes no claim to being complete--even for the Province of Ontario, the major focus--three other influences deserve mention: the sentence combining movement, the Braddock, Lloyd-Jones, and Schoer Report (1963), the Dartmouth Conference (1966), since each pushed language study into the background. In addition, interest in dialect studies in the 1960s appeared to show promise for school study.

1. Sentence Combining. The promise of Frank O'Hare's NCTE monograph (1973, based on his doctoral dissertation)

Sentence *Combining: *Improving Student Writing without Formal Grammar Instruction epitomized a century-old American dream: painless writing improvement. O'Hare simplified the treatments used in previous studies: others had taught transformational-generative grammar, using sentence-combining exercises to reinforce the principles of the grammar, with mixed results. O'Hare used only the sentence-combining exercises and achieved substantial and significant results on the grade-seven level. This research spawned a decade of follow-up studies as researchers worked through every possible combination of experimental subjects from about grade three to graduate school with virtually all studies reporting significant increases in syntactic complexity and about half significant increases in the quality of written composition, though few studies attempted to judge the longitudinal effects of the treatments and those which did reported no lasting effects (Crowhurst 1983).

For a short time in the late 1970s and early 1980s, (judging from in-service sessions by and for teachers, writing in professional journals, and what student teachers were asked to do by their sponsors) sentence combining became the only form of language study in many secondary school classrooms. However, many factors conspired against sentence combining (it was largely workbook oriented; there was little for the teacher to do; students did not find it exciting; results were measurable largely only through the somewhat esoteric exercise of counting the lengths of t-units and other clausal elements) and the sentence-combining texts have now largely moved from the classroom to the bookroom. For language awareness, the

significant feature of sentence combining was that it replaced other language study; when it disappeared, language study returned to exercises in usage, if it returned at all.

2. Research on Written Composition It wasn't exactly news in 1963 when Braddock, Lloyd-Jones and Schoer proclaimed that as far as written composition went, "the teaching of formal grammar has a negligible or, because it usually displaces some instruction and practice in actual composition, even a harmful effect on the improvement of writing" (pp. 37-38). However, Braddock, et al said it at the right time, said it most forcefully and found a receptive audience. Since language study up until that time had been largely the naming of parts and drill and grill, the absence of utilitarian value of grammar greatly diminished interest in any language study, despite the fact that one of Braddock et al's two dozen questions on "Unexplored Territory" was "17. Can study of the newer types of linguistics help writers?" (p. 53)

3. The Dartmouth Era. What Sputnik ("travelling companion" in Russian) in 1957 did for North American education in general, the Anglo-American Seminar on the Teaching of English at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire in 1966 did for English teaching in particular: both events challenged our fundamental beliefs and shocked us out of our complacency. The British and Americans found themselves living worlds apart and the viewpoints of the two sides were probably best expressed in the titles of publications produced by each: John Dixon's Growth Through English (1967) placed the emphasis on helping the student develop as a human being while H. J. Muller's The

Uses of English (1967) focused on English as a subject for study, a body of material to master. In North America, the Dixon model prevailed and language study fell by the wayside.

4. Scholarly Interest. In the 1960s a good deal of scholarly interest in dialect study seemed to have the potential to introduce students to the study of dialect variation and how their language changes. In Canada, the Canadian Council of Teachers of English and the Canadian Linguistic Association jointly sponsored the Survey of Canadian English (Scargill and Warkentyne, 1972) and such projects as Story's Dictionary of Newfoundland English got underway. However, other than informing such textbooks as Our Own Voice, these projects did not seem to have much impact on schools. In the United States, the scholarship on dialects by Allen, Atwood, Bloomfield, Francis, Gleason, Kurath, Marckwardt, McDavid was translated into school study in such publications as Malmstrom and Ashley's Dialects USA (1963) and Shuy's Discovering American Dialects (1967), both sponsored by the NCTE Commission on the English Language.

III. Preparing for the Coming Revolution

Judging from the current textbooks and curriculum guides, the revolution in the teaching of language promised in the 1960s and 1970s has indeed fizzled. It has, however, left a solid (if out of print) legacy of textbooks and other materials which might provide starting points for the predicted revolution in the teaching of language. Of course, any failed revolution raises the question "why?" and this question must be asked about the fizzled revolution if we are to avoid reliving our history and starting another revolution destined to fail. Perhaps this question could be addressed in two ways: first, an in-depth post mortem on the aborted revolution and second an examination of current classroom practice: what teachers are teaching and what students are learning in today's secondary English classrooms.

In addition, Canadian English educators will need to join in the international dialogue on Language Awareness, to reap the benefits of the discussions and debates which have taken place in the U.K. over the past two decades. One of the prerequisites for a successful revolution in education is a strong conceptual basis for the new pedagogy. The revolutions in the teaching of composition and the teaching of literature both started out with firm conceptual underpinnings which were refined as the revolutions progressed. This lack of a firm conceptual basis may have contributed to the failure of the earlier revolution in the teaching of language.

A. What Caused the Revolution to Fizzle? Our investigation of

the textbooks and programs of study used to teach language in the Province of Ontario suggests that there was an official recognition of language study beyond Latinate grammar and standard usage for a relatively short span of time. Of course, even during this time inquiry methods were competing with grill and drill of traditional grammar and standard usage. Furthermore, little is known about the impact on the classroom by these ideas beyond what can be inferred from historical notes on some of the textbooks. For example, Learning English must have been widely accepted because a record of over 250,000 copies were sold across Canada. On the other hand, perhaps a better inference about how far these methods and materials had penetrated into English classrooms can be drawn from the fact that the books went out of print without apparent objection from teachers or incentive for the authors or others to revise or improve them.

There are, however, opportunities to assess the textbooks and other materials both by interviewing teachers who had used them in their classrooms and by developing criteria on which to judge the potential effectiveness of the materials in the classroom. A number of other factors might be relevant to the failure of the revolution including teachers' university or inservice preparation in language study; students' and parents' attitudes towards language study; and what took the place of language study in the curriculum-as-taught (was language study supplanted by the writing as process movement? did sentence combining replace language study, as hypothesized above?).

B. Taking Stock of Methods and Materials. The textbooks and

other materials developed from the mid-1960s on may, as suggested above, provide good starting points for what we would like to see as language study in English classrooms. They are oriented to student investigations in language, to dialect study, to the history of the English language, and to descriptive linguistics. They also consider standard usage important but examine it from the point of view of appropriateness for a given situation. But that is merely our opinion and the coming revolution would benefit from an objective annotated bibliography which describes and evaluates textbooks, audio-visual materials, and commercial materials (such as the Public Broadcasting System's "The Story of English").

Such an investigation would also reveal the shortcomings of these materials. This work ignores many areas of scholarly interest which may (in some form) arguably have a place in the education of secondary school students: semiotics, semantics, transformational-generative grammar, systemics, pragmatics, speech-act theory, schema-theory, sociolinguistics, and child-language development, to name a few. Deciding what to teach when and to whom will probably be based as much on the instincts of the textbook author and teacher as on the grammatical equivalent of cultural capital that every citizen should know.

C. Research into current practice. Although authorized textbooks and official curriculum guides paint a pretty bleak picture of English language study in Canadian schools in the 1990s, this may not be an accurate reflection of what is in

fact being taught and learned. On the one hand, teachers may be using previous textbooks and current commercial materials to teach exciting, comprehensive units in language study. On the other hand, it might be a safer bet that little is being taught beyond the naming of parts and the niceties of standard usage. We believe (and we have submitted a proposal for a research grant for such a project) that it would be valuable to know what is being taught in the name of English language studies in Canada today. Such a study might involve both a national survey of a sample of teachers of English and their students and in-depth classroom visitations and interviews with another sample.

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